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by amoralagent

Summary

"Religion and faith are separate entities, often intertwined. Faith can come with inherent benefits--" Will snorted.

"Says the cannibal."

Will's practicality when it comes to fixing clockwork turns into a discussion of pragmatism and faith. Will finds it to be a strange kind of foreplay.

Notes

Again, they talk about religion and faith, the idea of god, and some of that stuff can be touchy, so beware.

Hannibal could've sworn the grandfather clock was in one piece when he left. A few steps in the door, and he was greeted by a scattered plethora of golden cogs, discarded tools seemingly tossed around, and intricate inner mechanisms in some kind of pile. The dark oak morbier case itself was lying fully on it's back like a euthanised patient, and right in the centre, there was Will sat in his bedclothes, his whole hand inside where the face of the clock would be, fiddling. He didn't look up, even when Hannibal closed the door behind him and moved to the kitchen to unpack the shopping. A few of the dogs that were milling around sniffed Hannibal in greeting. Will didn't seemingly register his presence at all, until he spoke, "It didn't chime."

Hannibal blinked at him, trying to ignore how disorganised it all was, "So, you're performing surgery?"

"Yes." Will sighed, sounding frustrated, and picked up one of the cogs to screw back into place.

"I'd think that greatly differs from boat engines." Hannibal offered, a intonation to his voice as if asking a question. Will sighed again, louder.

"My dad took apart a clock like this when we spent a couple of nights in a hotel in Charleston." Will recalled, still fiddling with his work, "It was smaller than this, though. He wanted to *stop* it chiming as much as it did. It was a good learning experience for both of us, as it turns out." He said it rather candidly for someone reciting a childhood memory.

"And you *want* it to chime?" Hannibal scowled, confused, as he recalled Will's melodramatic complaints about how the bell tolls were going to make him go, quote: *fucking batshit*. Yet there he was, fixing it, "May I ask, why?"

Will stopped then and glanced up at him, his eyes soft and surprisingly calm, "I got used to the sound. It kept me acutely aware of the passing of time." He admitted, pushing a dog paw out of the way to pick up a miniature screwdriver. Hannibal finished packing up and shrugged off his coat, going over to the rack and hanging it.

"The passing of time is normally something that gives people anxiety- in fear that it's not being used wisely." Will shrugged in response, leaning in to get a better view of what he was doing.

"It was useful in waking me up."

"You normally wake up well-past twelve, Will."

"Exactly. That's when it does the little jingle, that wakes me up. It's like an alarm clock." Hannibal took off his suit jacket and put it on the back of a chair, rolling up his sleeves to make preparations for their lunch.

"What you're referring to is when it hits striking hour. And you don't get out of bed after that, either." Will have him a abrasive look and he only gave a fond smile that was mainly in the

lines around his eyes, "I think you're use of it as an alarm is merely wishful thinking."

"Is there any harm in it? I haven't got much else to do, that is, when we *aren't* murdering innocents." He countered, frustration prevalent again. If another sideways comment was made, Hannibal was pretty sure he'd be told, in no uncertain terms, to fuck off. Decidedly, Hannibal thought it best to leave Will to it, or the screwdriver he was yielding could end up rooting around behind *his* face.

After about six hours of on and off labour and two meals later, Will had managed to get the clock all back together in working order, by that evening. When he first heaved it up to stand and tested it, that familiar but ear-piercing noise sounded, and he figured that all the neck and back ache was undeniably worth it. Hannibal heard the chiming from his study, and not long after, came downstairs with a proud smile to kiss Will's temple in applaud of his handiwork. Then, Will turned and kissed him properly, if briefly, despite his foul mood- made marginally less so by his achievement- which took Hannibal entirely by surprise. More often than not, if Will was so defensively irritable, it meant he'd avoid as much interaction as humanely possible until at least the next day, or whenever the mood passed. It seemed the mood had indeed passed.

Stretching out his stiffened shoulder, Will sat on the arm of the couch opposite the clock and started fussing one of the more friendly dogs who butted against his thigh, huffing: "Maybe we should just get an alarm clock. It'd save me a lot of pain."

Just like that, Hannibal's hand was on his shoulder and pushed comfortably against the muscle, in a gentle massage, "I wouldn't be opposed to helping you remedy that pain."

"Oh, I can think of *plenty* of ways that you could." Will quipped, salacious and teasing, and Hannibal's gaze was strikingly tender with appreciation, before kissing him again, and going off to collect some wine.

"Do you think, when you hear the chimes tomorrow, that you'll start the day as and when they sound?" His question entered the room before he did, giving Will one of the glasses and pouring generously into each.

"Who knows." He half-shrugged, watching Hannibal contently and bringing the rim of the glass to his lips, inhaling deeply, "We all engage in useful fictions." He added, before taking a long sip. Hannibal admired him for a moment, eyes and face masterful in the yellow-red tinge of the lighting, then moved away to put the bottle down on the coffee table and sit gracefully down in his armchair by the fireplace.

"People are very pragmatic that way." He agreed, falling into a pause whilst watching Will put his glass down and collapse back onto the couch, throwing his legs up across it but seated to face him. Will pulled the sheepskin throw over his legs and balanced his wine glass between his fingers, looking like some sort of dimly lit Renaissance painting- minus the fruit- lights casting flattering shadows along the hollows of his face and neck and jaw, eyes thoughtful and warm. Hannibal considered capturing the moment in smudged charcoal, looking away before he got too entranced, "Pragmatic ideals can encourage many things."

Will's brow furrowed, noticeably curious, "Is belief in God merely pragmatic?"

"Depends on who you ask. Pascal's wager would suggest to bet on it anyway." Hannibal mused, crossing one leg over the other and putting his glass on the table beside his seat. Will didn't seem convinced, maybe even put-off by the idea.

"Wouldn't it all just be restrictive?"

"In what way?"

"Depends on your beliefs, but enjoy a lot of things, from sleeping in on Sundays, to *fucking*." Will paused to drink, leaving room for the word to drape between them, having said it to plant the seed of the idea, revelling in twitches and cracks of Hannibal's face, "I would want that messed with because a possibly nonexistent deity says so."

Hannibal tilted his head fractionally, "Would your theism *require* going to church?"

"Sometimes. Maybe." Will guessed, thinking of the startlingly quiet beauty of the Cappella Palatina, as bright as the starlit firmament of heaven, regaled in impeccable, timeless artistry. Utterly devastating. The roof then collapsing, slow as if suspended in water, and stunningly tragic; watching something so glorious turn to rubble would be a disgraced kind of poetry.

"Did you ever go as a child?"

"Sometimes. Having to endure the judgemental looks of the rest of the mass in their Sunday best was enough to put me off." He chuckled lightly, a laugh hiding pain.

"Too social?"

"Too stupid." Will corrected, breaking eye contact, "They're *complete* hypocrites: the churchgoers- the judgemental ones, at least. They sit with their straightest faces, cleanest clothes, their stories and prayers already prepared. It seems--" He gestured in a way that looked like he was taking the word from the air, "*Shallow*."

"People such as them believe God will approve- that they should only have to care about Him then, about how they're viewed." Hannibal's expression was one of curt dismissal, "People think God can be chained up in places like that. They forget that he can't be chained as man can. And that he sees all."

Will smiled, disarmingly, quickly quelled to a glint in his eye as he spoke, "Doesn't that make you paranoid?"

Hannibal's brow quirked, eyes dark and fond, "Do we hide from God?"

The smile crept back then, just looking at each other for a moment: "No. No, we don't." Hannibal narrowed his eyes a little at him, affectionately, the same as he would if scrutinising a painting by one of the old masters. Then, taking up his glass again to drink.

"Religion and faith are separate entities, often intertwined. Faith can come with inherent benefits--" Will snorted.

"Says the cannibal."

If Hannibal was *anyone else*, he would've at least rolled his eyes at that. He simply put down his wine with a clink and tried not to glare.

"People feel security, in knowing the world is ordered, and all things have meaning." Hannibal continued, "Safe in the knowledge that there's always someone watching over you."

"Or you could stop just believing, and *do* things that are meaningful." Will argued, leaning over to fill his glass again, "And find someone real-- *physically* here, to look out for you." He gestured to Hannibal with a tilt of his glass when he said it.

"It's for comfort."

"It's for self interest." One of the dogs hopped up near Will's feet and quickly curled up and settled. Hannibal's jaw tensed as he watched it happen but he said nothing, and Will took notice, stroking the pug absentmindedly with his toes, "Does God even care how you get a free pass to Heaven? Or does he just care that you do?" Hannibal relaxed the knot of his tie.

"It don't think it particularly matters, as long as you *do* believe."

"Surely you can't *make* yourself believe? I know I tried, when I was younger."

Calmly, Hannibal picked up his glass and spoke before taking a mouthful, scenting, "I've made you believe in *plenty* of nonexistent things." Will hoped he'd choke.

"Okay, that was different--"

"Self interest can grow into an honest conviction." When Hannibal looked back over to Will he could see him trying to sate his annoyance at that harsh of a low blow. He would've smiled, if only to watch him squirm, "You simply need to find a way to nurture it."

"Fake it 'til you make it? That's dishonesty, if I've ever heard it." *And I have, from you* was left unsaid, but it was there in his eyes: "I know rationality is a strong point of yours," *That sounded suspiciously like sarcasm*, "But religious beliefs are just, very much beyond that."

"Kierkegaard's argument was that belief in God is fantastic, purely because it is entirely irrational. You can't do it with only your brain; it doesn't work with only with logical thought."

"So-- you'd be taking a leap of faith?"

"*To* faith." Hannibal uncrossed his legs, relaxing more, "You have to surrender reason to get to truth." He let that stir in the space between them, "In a way, faith is total surrender to God." Will blinked, either taking it in or thinking of an argument, and sighed pensively.

"Seems fake, but okay." Will shrugged, downing the last of his drink, "Now, get over here- and make me *surrender* to you."

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